

Merkel of Germany, Gazprom's stake in Wingas will rise to just under 50 percent.

Gazprom is also poised to sign a similar development deal with E.On.

"Their discussions are advancing," Mr. Moncrief said. "The letter to E.On is preemptive and assumes that it will strike a similar deal with Gazprom to the one signed last month.

"Both BASF and E.On were informed by Moncrief of its prior interest in the Y.-R. field in 2005 when the first reports of a deal with Gazprom were emerging, and again in March this year—we still received no response. Certainly no one has ever denied the existence of our prior interest."

A Wintershall spokesman, Stefan Leunig, refused to "comment on the validity of Moncrief's claim."

Mr. Leunig said he did not expect the threat of legal action from Moncrief to affect the deal it signed with Gazprom last month, adding that his company's lawyers "do not recognize any legal foundation for a lawsuit by Moncrief against BASF-Wintershall in a court in Germany."

E.On could not be reached for comment.

Mr. Miller said he was confident that his company had grounds to sue. "Wintershall and E.On both know that their interest in the Y.-R. field interferes with Moncrief's contracts," he said, adding, "We value our 40 percent stake in Yuzhno-Russkoye at around \$8 billion."

Moncrief agreed to invest \$800 million to \$1 billion in the gas field, which it estimates contains 600 billion cubic meters of natural gas deposits. Mr. Miller said it had spent \$10 million to \$15 million on engineering and financing connected with the gas field.

Moncrief tried to sue Gazprom in Federal District Court in Fort Worth, but the court ruled that the case fell outside its jurisdiction. Moncrief is appealing that decision. In the meantime, rather than pursue Gazprom on its home territory, Mr. Miller said his company stood a better chance of fair treatment in Germany. "We don't think we'll get a fair trial in Russia," he said.

Michael Emerson, a specialist in European energy matters with the Center for European Policy Studies in Brussels, an independent research group, said Gazprom had reasons for extending its distribution reach further into Europe.

In addition to selling in lucrative European markets, the company is trying to thwart efforts to establish a new pipeline bringing gas from Turkmenistan to Europe through Turkey. Pressure to create such a pipeline mounted after gas supplies from Russia were cut to countries including Ukraine this past winter.

"Gazprom doesn't want this alternative supply route," Mr. Emerson said. "By consolidating its stake in E.On and BASF, Gazprom will gain a voice in all the strategic investment issues, and will be better placed to persuade European companies not to invest in a competing route."

TRIBUTE TO LANIE BLACK

HON. JO ANN EMERSON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 28, 2006

Mrs. EMERSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Lanie Black for his years of public service to citizens of Southeast Missouri. Rep. Black has represented the 161st district in the Missouri House of Representatives since 1998, and he will retire at the end of the 2d Session of the 93rd General Assembly.

While in the Missouri House of Representatives, Lanie Black has been an active member of the Economic Development Committee and chaired the Transportation Committee. He has been a tireless advocate for his constituents, ensuring that their views are represented in the Missouri General Assembly.

Lanie has been a life-long resident of Charleston, Missouri. He is a 1965 graduate of Charleston High School. He then went on to Vanderbilt University to earn a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering. After graduating from Vanderbilt, Rep. Black served as a diver for the U.S. Navy.

In addition to serving in the Missouri House of Representatives, Lanie Black has been an active member of his community. Rep. Black operates a poultry farm near Charleston, Missouri. He is a member of the local Kiwanis Club and the Missouri Farm Bureau. Lanie has continued to help the Boy Scouts of America as a scoutmaster. In 1993, Lanie Black was honored as the Charleston Man of the Year for his outstanding community involvement.

There are few individuals in public service who are as dedicated to our communities and country as Lanie Black. He has always put the views and interests of his constituents before his own political interest. Rep. Black was able to use his great knowledge of agriculture and rural affairs to better represent the needs and concerns of the citizens of Southeast Missouri. His strong faith and firm values guided him to public service, and he will exit that stage with dignity and class.

Mr. Speaker, I once again ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Rep. Lanie Black. Missouri is a better place because of his leadership, and we wish Rep. Black the best of luck in all his future endeavors.

TRIBUTE TO PETER MYERS

HON. JO ANN EMERSON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 28, 2006

Mrs. EMERSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Peter Myers, Missouri State Representative for the 160th legislative district. Rep. Myers is retiring from the Missouri General Assembly after eight years of distinguished service.

Rep. Myers was born on January 4, 1931 in Racine, Wisconsin. Upon graduation from William Horlick High School in Racine, Wisconsin, he earned a Bachelor's degree in agriculture from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1953. Rep. Myers proudly served his country from 1953–1955 as a 1st Lieutenant in the U.S. Army Ordinance Corp. Rep. Myers then moved to Southeast Missouri in 1955, to own and operate a farm on the outskirts of Sikeston, MO. From 1955–1982, Rep. Myers worked the land and spent countless days in the fields cultivating crops. During this time, Rep. Myers gained a reputation as being an extremely knowledgeable and skilled farmer.

In the early eighties, Rep. Myers ventured into public service by accepting positions with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Although Rep. Myers had been involved in many civic organizations and recognized as a leader in Missouri Agriculture, he was able to bring his expertise to a national level. He served in sev-

eral capacities throughout USDA, and eventually rose to the level of Deputy Secretary of Agriculture during the Reagan Administration. After Rep. Myers' service to USDA, he remained a strong voice for the American farmer.

In 1998, Rep. Myers decided to further serve Missourians in the General Assembly. He won a seat in the Missouri House of Representatives, representing the 160th District. Rep. Myers eventually rose to become the Chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture. Missourians have been fortunate to have such a devoted and well-versed member of the General Assembly. In addition to Rep. Myers' legislative duties, he advises Adopt a Farm Family of America, Inc., which is a Christian organization that provides support to rural citizens. Rep. Myers has committed his life to bettering the lives not just of farmers or his constituents, but of all Missourians.

As Rep. Myers completes his final term in the Missouri General Assembly, he can rest assured his actions in Jefferson City are well-respected by all Missouri farmers. His wife Mary and five children deserve to be commended as well, for they have supported Rep. Myers through the years. I once again congratulate Rep. Myers on his devoted service to the citizens of Missouri's 160th District. While Rep. Myers' time in office is winding down, I am certain he will remain a prominent figure in Missouri public life.

HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PROMOTION ACT OF 2006

SPEECH OF

HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 27, 2006

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4157) to amend the Social Security Act to encourage the dissemination, security, confidentiality and usefulness of health information technology:

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Chairman, I rise to express some concerns with the bill before us, but also to urge my colleagues to find ways to encourage the careful development of meaningful health information technology systems. It is critical that we move rapidly toward the development and implementation of an electronic health information system, but it also is critical that this be done with great forethought and integrity.

I regret that I cannot support the bill before us today because it fails to include critical components mandating quality in our health care technology systems. Furthermore, I echo the concerns of my colleagues regarding the need for patient privacy standards and important consumer protections.

This is a missed opportunity for our nation's health care system. The goal of moving health care from pen and paper to the digital age has enjoyed bipartisan support. I am troubled that the bill presented to the House of Representatives today fails to meet the standards of the bipartisan coalition spearheaded by my colleague, PATRICK KENNEDY.

In recent years, I have been proud to see the health care community in Rhode Island come together to accelerate the use of health

information technology in our state. One project in particular—and this is just one of many—called EHR-RI, has brought together physicians, hospital administrators and insurance company representatives to focus on the goals of getting this technology into physicians' offices and aiding in the often-complicated transition to new systems. The health care community recognizes the need to compromise and work in collaboration to achieve the goals of using technology to help patients and their families.

Because the efficient use of technology is central to our efforts to control costs and increase quality in health care, I urge my colleagues in Congress to follow their lead. Support stronger legislation that would truly advance the electronic health information exchange in our nation's health care system.

TRIBUTE TO DANIELLE BRIGHT

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 28, 2006

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Danielle Bright, a Haitian community leader, education activist and upstanding member of the Rockland county community.

Born in Haiti in 1951 her family fled the oppressive Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier regime in 1964. Her family then spent two years in Congo before moving to Europe. It was in 1971, in France that she married Lealy Bright; they later had two children. The family eventually settled in the United States in 1978, first in Brooklyn and then in my district in Rockland County.

After moving to New York, Ms. Bright did not forget her Haitian heritage. She went on to be a longtime activist for the Haitian Community in Rockland County. She was the founder and a board member of the Haitian-American Parents Association. Most recently, she was honored at the annual dinner of the Martin Luther King Multi-Purpose center.

Fighting for the Haitian community was just one of Ms. Bright's causes. She was also a strong advocate for education for all children. She was an active member of the East Ramapo Board of Education. An ardent opponent of school budget cuts, she always argued that children deserved better. Those who worked alongside Ms. Bright on the school board called her a fierce advocate, dedicated to her work.

Danielle Bright spent a large portion of her life trying to improve the lives of others. She will be sorely missed by all of those in the community whose lives she touched.

RECOGNIZING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE IRANIAN CONSTITUTIONAL REVOLUTION

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 28, 2006

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, next month marks the 100th anniversary of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution, a pivotal event in Persian and Middle Eastern history. In the

face of a corrupt and authoritarian monarchy, and in order to defend Persian interests against British and Russian imperialism, the Persian people rose up and forced the creation of a parliament and the adoption of a constitution containing basic democratic rights for the first time in Iranian history.

To mark these events, I will be introducing a resolution recognizing and honoring the 100th anniversary of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution, which I have drafted with the support of leading members of the Iranian-American community and the input of preeminent scholars of modern Iranian history.

At a time when the United States faces very serious and difficult issues with regards to Iran, this historic event demonstrates that the Iranian people have a long-standing desire for democratic self-government, free from authoritarian rule or foreign interference. I believe that understanding these values common to the Iranian and American peoples, as well as Iran's political history, will help us develop a constructive policy towards Iran. It is also an important sign of support for the Iranian people and our Iranian-American constituents.

INTRODUCTION OF THE HOMELESS VETERANS ASSISTANCE ACT OF 2006

HON. MICHAEL H. MICHAUD

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 28, 2006

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing H.R. 5960, the Homeless Veterans Assistance Act of 2006, to fortify our Nation's efforts to prevent and end homelessness among veterans.

Each night, as many as 200,000 male and female veterans are sleeping in a doorway, under a bridge, in an alley, box, barn, car, or homeless shelter. While the number of homeless veterans has decreased somewhat, many veterans are on the brink of homelessness. Many veterans are at high risk of homelessness because of poverty, dismal living conditions, and lack of support.

A third of homeless men living on the street are veterans. Women veterans are up to four times more likely to become homeless when compared with their peers in the general population. According to the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans, the number of women among homeless veterans is increasing, from 2 percent of the homeless veteran population in 1996 to 7 percent at the end of 2005.

About half of all homeless veterans suffer from mental illness. More than two-thirds suffer from alcohol or drug abuse problems.

Behind these disturbing statistics are real men and women who have served our nation. We must lift the veil of invisibility that conceals the reality of homeless veterans. We must take action to honor these veterans. The Department of Veterans Affairs has many good programs that need Congressional reauthorization to continue. However, even with these programs, we are not meeting the demand or providing adequate support to prevent at-risk veterans from falling into homelessness.

Earlier this month the Associated Press reported that homelessness is a threat for returning veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan. Herold Noel is a 26-year-old former Army pri-

vate first class who served in Iraq during the beginning of the war. When he returned to New York, he could not find a job to support his wife and children. They ended up in a homeless shelter after the housing programs for veterans in the city were full. Mr. Noel is suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), caused by his experience in the service. Mr. Noel, who drove a fuel-truck in Iraq, has had to deal with nightmarish images that he saw during war.

We must and can take steps to prevent homelessness among our returning troops.

My legislation recommitments our nation to preventing and ending homelessness among veterans.

My legislation is the result of an ongoing dialogue with the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans, information and findings from a Congressional briefing sponsored by Democratic Members of House Committee on Veterans Affairs, which heard from VA experts, community providers of care for homeless veterans and former homeless veterans, reports from the Department of Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans, and annual reports from the VA evaluating VA's health care programs for homeless veterans.

Specifically my legislation would extend expired authorization for VA's successful Homeless Veterans Grant & Per Diem Program through 2011 and reauthorizes yearly appropriations for the program at \$200 million.

In fiscal year 2005, the average per day payment to community providers to provide shelter, meals and intensive supportive services to veterans was \$24.16. It would be hard to find a hotel room in most cities at that rate, let alone provide a veteran with meals and supportive services, such as mental health and vocational counseling. My legislation would put the per diem rate paid to community service providers on par with the per diem rates for State Veterans Homes providing domiciliary care, which is \$31.30 for 2006.

This increase will greatly improve the capacity of community providers to help homeless veterans recover, rehabilitate and reintegrate back into society.

My legislation also improves accountability and performance of the Homeless Veterans Grant & Per Diem Program by requiring the Secretary to establish performance standards to evaluate and document clinical activities and outcomes.

The legislation also would require each grant recipient to provide financial information necessary for the VA to verify that payments provide services to homeless veterans.

VA provides grants for comprehensive homeless service centers that are open to homeless veterans on an unscheduled and drop-in basis. These centers are a vital access point to homeless veterans. The legislation clarifies that funding for these drop-in service centers for homeless veterans may be used to maintain adequate staffing for services.

The authorization to treat veterans suffering from serious mental illness, including homeless veterans expires on December 12, 2006. In addition, the authority to expand and improve the provision of benefits and services to homeless veterans in the 20 largest metropolitan areas expires on December 31, 2006. The legislation extends both authorities for five years, through 2011.

The legislation also extends authorization of program in 38 U.S.C. 2041 through 2011.